

a Bureau head. The Administrative Assistant 2 title is used to classify positions which assist a Division Director in a State department, institution, or agency. *See e.g., In the Matter of Christine Voilas* (CSC, decided March 11, 2009). As the appellant does not report to a Division Director, this is not an acceptable title to consider. Regardless, Agency Services determined the proper classification of the appellant's position was Secretarial Assistant 3, Non-Stenographic, the title to which she is regularly appointed.

On appeal, the appellant argues that she has been assigned additional duties due to attrition of staff, and that Agency Services did not address all of her duties. She states that she works for four Boards with no temporary help. She states that she logs in applications and attachments, sends emails for information, answers emails about licenses, and updates the database. She resubmits her PCQ, and argues that she has been loyal for thirty years and have not had a title change. She questions how a consultant who does not know her work ethic or her job can be qualified to determine the classification of her position.

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:3-3.9(e) states that in classification appeals the appellant shall provide copies of all materials submitted, the determination received from the lower level, statements as to which if portions of the determination are being disputed, and the basis for appeal. Information and/or argument which was not presented at the prior level of appeal shall not be considered.

The definition section of the job specification for Secretarial Assistant 3, Non-Stenographic states:

May be assigned as a secretary to Assistant Division Directors, Bureau Chiefs, their organizational equivalents, or Executive Assistants 1; does other related duties.

The definition section of the job specification for Administrative Assistant 2 states:

Assists a division director in a state department, institution, or agency by performing and coordinating administrative support services; does other related work as required.

The definition section of the job specification for Administrative Assistant 3 states:

Assists the head of a Bureau or Service in a State department, institution, or agency by performing and coordinating administrative support services; does other related work.

A review of the duties of the appellant's position indicates that they most closely match the job description for Secretarial Assistant 3, Non-Stenographic. Also, the fact that some of an employee's assigned duties may compare favorably with some examples of work found in a given job specification is not determinative for classification purposes, since, by nature, examples of work are utilized for illustrative purposes only. Moreover, it is not uncommon for an employee to perform some duties which are above or below the level of work which is ordinarily performed.

Further, it is long-standing policy that upon review of a request for position classification, when it is found that the majority of an incumbent's duties and responsibilities are related to the examples of work found in a particular job specification, that title is deemed the appropriate title for the position. In this regard, it is noted that titles are categorized as professional, para-professional or non-professional. *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-2.5(a)1 states that professional titles require at least a Bachelor's or higher level degree, with or without a clause to substitute experience. Professional work is predominantly intellectual and character, as opposed to routine mental, manual, mechanical or physical work, and it involves the consistent exercise of judgment. It is basically interpretive, evaluative, analytical and/or creative, requiring knowledge or expertise in a specialized field of knowledge. This is generally acquired by a course of intellectual or technical instruction, study and/or research at an institution of higher learning or acquired through an in-depth grasp of cumulative experience. However, there must be thorough familiarity with all the information, theories and assumptions implicit in the chosen field. Persons in professional work should be able to perceive, evaluate, analyze, formulate hypothesis, and think in the abstract. Positions are considered professional when the work requires *application* of professional knowledge and abilities, as distinguished from either the desirability of such application or the simple possession of professional knowledge and abilities.

The Administrative Assistant series was created to classify positions responsible for performing a variety of duties to relieve the executive officer of administrative details relative to the internal operation of the unit, and coordinating support services to insure the availability and efficient use of resources needed to accomplish the goal of the unit. They are involved in analysis, determination, and implementation of changes and improvements of procedures that involve personnel, records management and movement (computerized and manual), budget and accounting recordkeeping, purchasing of services and materials, physical layouts of facilities, and workflow and operations procedures, *etc.* This is not a super-clerical or paraprofessional title, but belongs in the

professional class, and the incumbent acts as principal assistant to the executive on administrative matters. The job definition does not state that performing and coordinating administrative support services includes clerical duties. Positions that provide essential secretarial and clerical support services are not Administrative Assistant positions. *See In the Matter of Maria Marcello and Jacquetta Warren* (MSB, decided February 11, 2004).

In the instant matter, the Executive Secretary, who supervises the position, has indicated the most important function of the position is organization regarding preparing agendas with all relevant materials, and following up regarding Board decisions and requests for additional information. These duties are secretarial in nature and do not rise to the level of professional work. The appellant also completed a Position Classification Questionnaire (PCQ), and responded to questions asked about her position. On the PCQ, the appellant indicated that for 15% of the time she was transcribing meeting minutes, letters and memos; for 25% of the time, she reviews, copies, prepares, distributes and forwards agendas and information for monthly Board meetings; for 15% of the time, she processes complaints in a database, gathers and disseminates information by letter, adds information to the agenda and database, and sends outcome letters; for 20% of the time, she assists her supervisor in responding to inquiries; and for 6% of the time, she answers inquiries, takes messages and routes calls. The remaining 19% of the time is spent on seven tasks which are clerical in nature. These majority of these duties are clerical and do not rise to the level of professional work. The appellant clearly does not perform duties of an Administrative Assistant 3, as the duties performed are not support services that insure the availability and efficient use of resources needed to accomplish the goal of the unit.

Lastly, with regard to the appellant's allegation that this agency's staff lacked knowledge of the appellant's work ethic and the details of the duties, it is noted that this agency's staff are not subject matter experts in the occupational field of a given interviewee. Their role is to elicit clear statements from the employee as they pertain to the duties and responsibilities of the position. Additionally, it is departmental policy that all audits are reviewed by supervisory and managerial staff prior to a decision being finalized. *See In the Matter of David Baldasari* (Commissioner of Personnel, decided August 22, 2006) (Appellant's argument that this agency's staff did not comprehend the information provided and had no experience in various computer systems resulted in a flawed position audit found to have no basis since this agency's staff role is to elicit information about the position and not to be a subject matter expert in a particular field). The outcome of position classification is not to provide a career path to the incumbents, but rather is to ensure that the position is classified in the most appropriate title available within the state's classification plan. *See In the Matter of Patricia Lightsey* (MSB, decided June 8, 2005), *aff'd on reconsideration* (MSB, decided November 22, 2005). Further, how well or efficiently an employee does his or her job, their length of service,

volume of work completed, and their qualifications have no effect on the classification of a position currently occupied, as *positions*, not employees, are classified. *See In the Matter of Debra DiCello* (CSC, decided June 24, 2009).

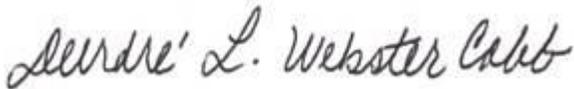
Accordingly, a thorough review of the entire record fails to establish that Melba Rodriguez has presented a sufficient basis to warrant an Administrative Assistant 3 classification of her position.

ORDER

Therefore, the position of Melba Rodriguez is properly classified as a Secretarial Assistant 3, Non-Stenographic.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON
THE 2ND DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2020



Deirdré L. Webster Cobb
Chairperson
Civil Service Commission

Inquiries
and
Correspondence

Christopher S. Myers
Director
Division of Appeals and Regulatory Affairs
Civil Service Commission
Written Record Appeals Unit
P. O. Box 312
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0312

c: Melba Rodriguez
Valerie Stutesman
Agency Services
Records Center